



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
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BCC 2009-006  
January 13, 2009

EXHIBIT 9  
DATE 1/14/09  
HB 18

House State Administration Committee

RE: House Bill 18 – Mail Ballot Pilot Project

Honorable Representatives of the House State Administration Committee:

The Missoula County Commissioners urge the House State Administration Committee to support the Mail Ballot Pilot Project, House Bill 18. Elections Administrators are currently required to run three distinct election processes simultaneously on Election Day – same day voter registration, absentee voting, and polling place voting. Polling place voting in Missoula County requires more than 650 election workers. Recruiting, training, and retaining reliable election judges is nearly impossible for our small staff and is increasingly expensive to Missoula County taxpayers. Securing training space alone cost over \$16,000 in 2008.

The Presidential Election cost Missoula County \$124,000 in 2004 and \$325,000 in 2008 – an increase of 162% – despite concerted efforts to save taxpayer money. Our Election Administrator estimates that the same election in 2008 held by mail would have cost Missoula County \$225,000, saving taxpayers approximately \$100,000. To continue asking Election Administrators to run elections on so many fronts without an alternative raises the demand on an already strained budget.

We are concerned that the integrity of the elections process could suffer as a result of increased pressure by federal law and the limited number of election judges available and able to perform their jobs.

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It is our responsibility to urge you to support HB ~~14~~, and allow the Mail Ballot Pilot Project the opportunity to solve a very serious problem in conducting elections.

Thank you,

Dale D. Bickell, Chief Administrative Officer  
for the Board of County Commissioners

cc: Vickie Zeier, Clerk & Recorder/Treasurer